



**DARK
HORSE
COMICS**
ORCHID

1

\$1.00

ORCHID



TOM MORELLO

SCOTT HEPBURN

DAN JACKSON

STORY BY
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ART BY
SCOTT HEPBURN

COLORS BY
DAN JACKSON

LETTERS BY
NATE PIEKOS OF BLAMBOT®



COVER
MASSIMO CARNEVALE

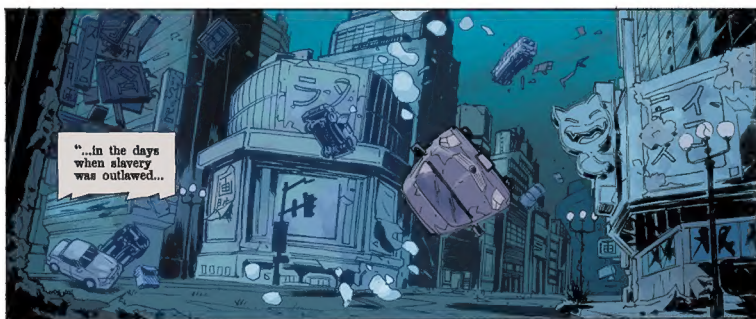
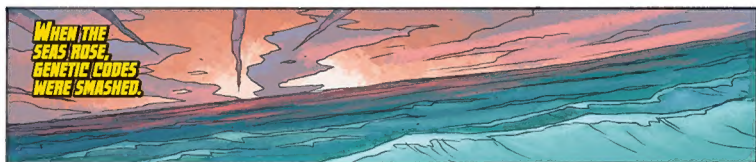
VARIANT COVER
SHEPARD FAIREY

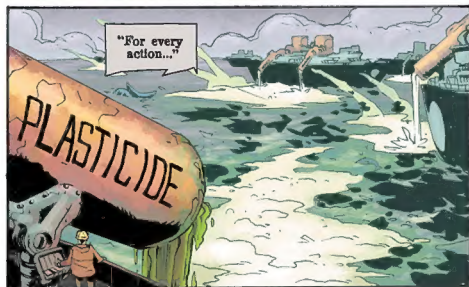
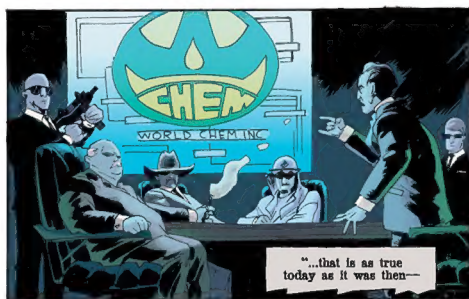
When the seas rose, genetic codes were smashed. Human settlements are ringed by the wild, from which ferocious new animal species prey on the helpless. The high ground belongs to the rich and powerful, who over-look swampland shantytowns from their fortresslike cities. Iron-fisted rule ensures order and allows the wealthy to harvest the poor as slaves. Welcome to the world of *Orchid*.


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PUBLISHER **MIKE RICHARDSON** SPECIAL THANKS TO **MICHELE FISHER**

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"The human settlements that remain are ringed by THE WILD, a dense, uncharted wilderness from which ferocious new animal species emerge to prey on the helpless.

"The high ground belongs to the rich and powerful. Fortresses like cities overlook vast expanses of desolate swampland, in which the scattered masses of castoff poor huddle in wet shantytowns under crumbling bridges.



"Iron-fisted rule ensures order with pitiless cruelty and allows the wealthy to harvest the poor as slaves.



"These wretched
BRIDGE PEOPLE,
condemned to a
life of enslavement
and poverty, turned
to a quasi-religious
mythic warrior for
redemption.

"An army of the
dispossessed
formed under the
mysterious General
China—a masked
leader who led an
assault on dictator
Tomo Wolfe's
impregnable
mountain city,
Fortress Fenuel.



"But the
rebellion
failed.

"General China
died in battle,
the infamous mask
taken as a prize
by Tomo Wolfe."



PRESENT DAY.

"The dead were
burned and
the survivors
trapped between
the slave traders
of Tomo Wolfe
and the Wild.

"Most **HAD**
given up
hope...

"...yet some refused to surrender.

"A young fighter named Angelo led a suicide raid on an armed caravan en route to Fortress Peniel. Against all odds he and his SHADOW REBELS 'liberated' the mask taken from the defeated General China.

"The mask was a symbol of hope, of resistance...and they were willing to die for it.

"The mask was also rumored to grant tremendous but perilous power to the one who wore it."

RUN!!

KEEP UP, SIMON!

OH, I'M JUST ENJOYING *2GASP* THE SUNSET. OCHRE HUES. WOULDN'T YOU *2GULP* SAY? AND DID YOU CATCH THAT *2WHEEZE* WHIFF OF AZALEAS ON THE BREEZE? LOVELY *2GASP* EVENING. MUST WE RUSH?

JUST SHUT UP AND RUN!



DIE,
GREENFOOT
SCUM!

SHUNK



THIS IS
IT! WE
FIGHT!

WITH
WHAT?!

I'D LIKE
TO THANK
YOU ALL
FOR THE
GOOD
TIMES...





THE PRISONERS ARE SECURED, DON GLETKIN.

YES. THE GREAT AND CUNNING ANZIO WAS NEITHER SO GREAT NOR SO CUNNING THIS TIME! ANSWER ME THIS BEFORE YOU DIE, YOU IMPUDENT FILTH, WHERE AMONG THE BRIDGES IS THE *SHADOW REBEL* ENCLAVE?!

TELL ME **NOW**... AND PERHAPS I'LL SPARE THESE OTHER WATER RATS!



Bah! WHEN YOU SUPERSTITIOUS FOOLS STOLE THIS "HOLY" MASK, YOU CHOSE YOUR FATE!

GAAH!!



BEHOLD THE FILTHY REMAINS OF A FILTHY PEOPLE!

AAGH!



KLIK



PERHAPS THIS ONE WILL DIE MORE BRAVELY, NO?

OR, "GREAT ANZIO," DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?



OOF!

NO!



I'LL BE
TAKING *THIS*
FROM THE SCARY
MURDERER
MAN, THANK
YOU!



NOW
PARDON
ME, SIRS,
BUT I DO
BELIEVE I'VE
OVERSTAYED...



...MY
WELCOME!





**EARLY
MORNING.**



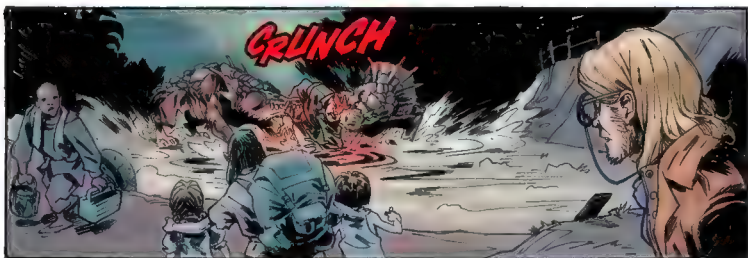
**AH! I'M
ALIVE! HOW
LONG?
ONE DAY?
TWO?**

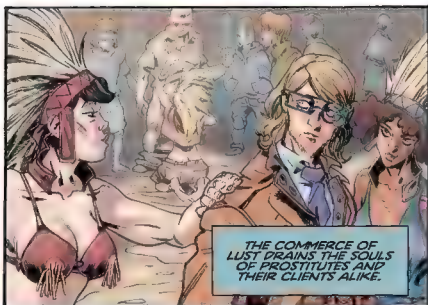
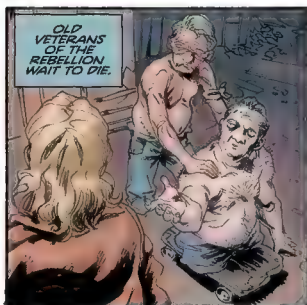
**SIX YEARS
IN THE SLAVE PITS,
ANOTHER SIX IN
THE ROBOTICS SLAVE
CORPS. TWO YEARS
ON THE RUN WITH
ANZIO AND THE
SHADOW REBELS
AND NOW...I'M
ALONE.**

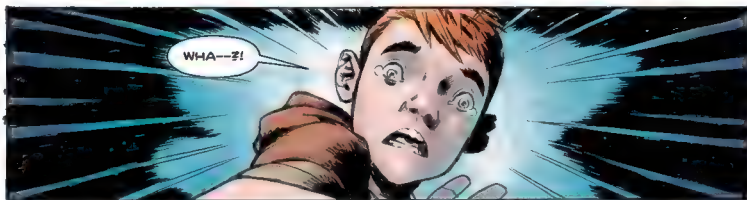
**BUT...
I'M
ALIVE.**

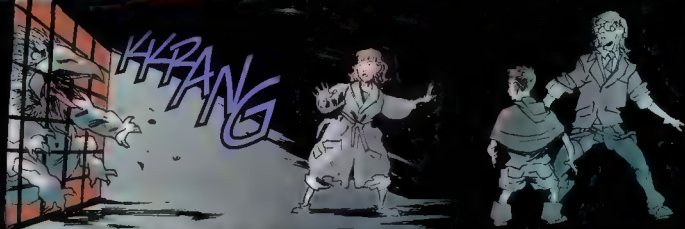
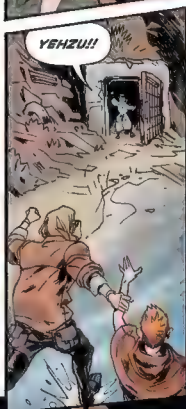


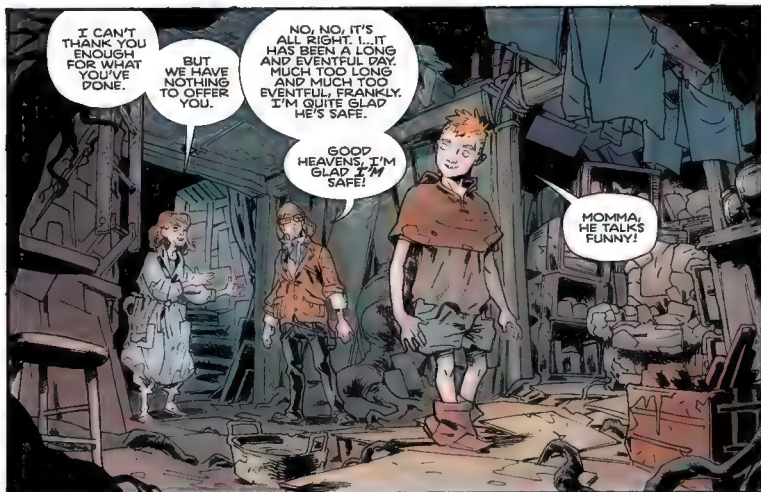
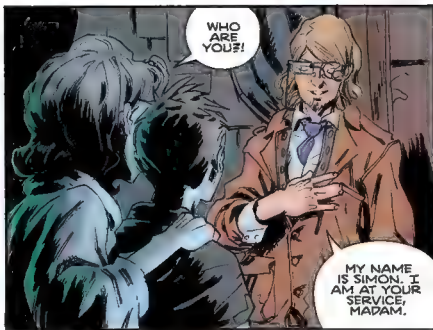
**AND
IT'S GOOD
TO BE
HOME.**



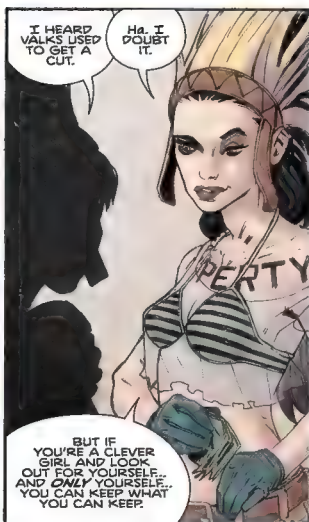
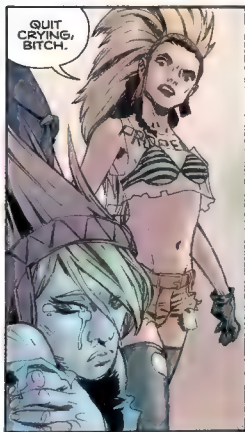
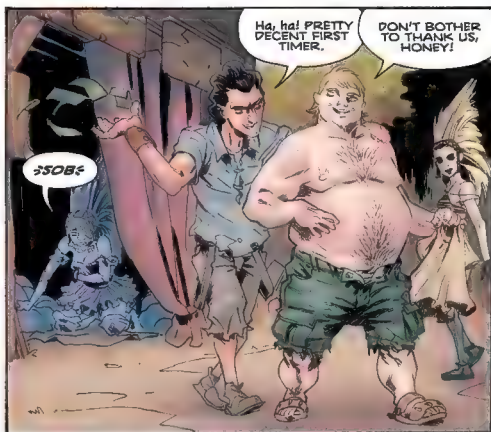


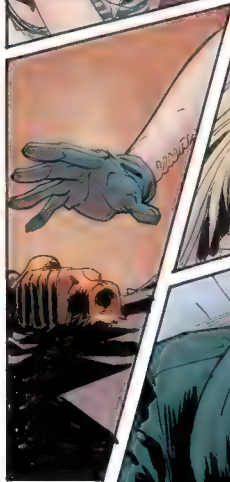
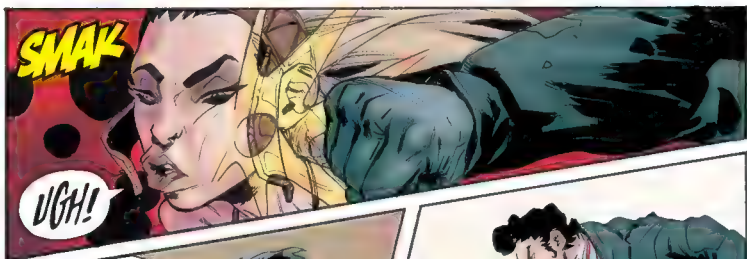


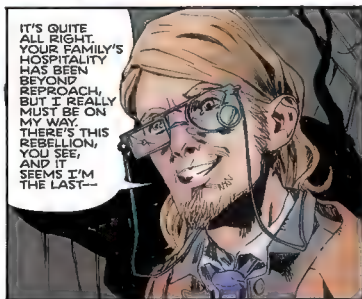
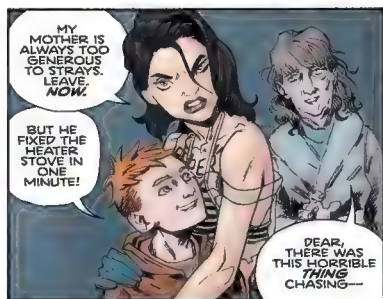
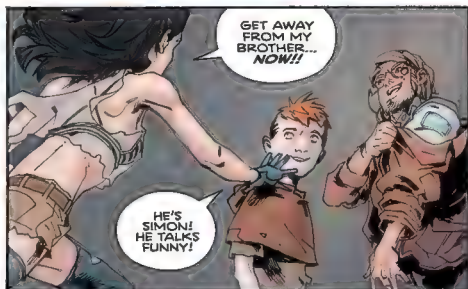
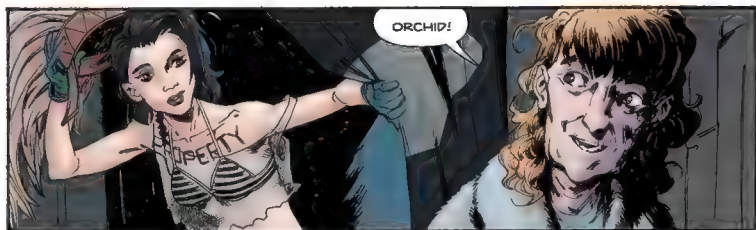


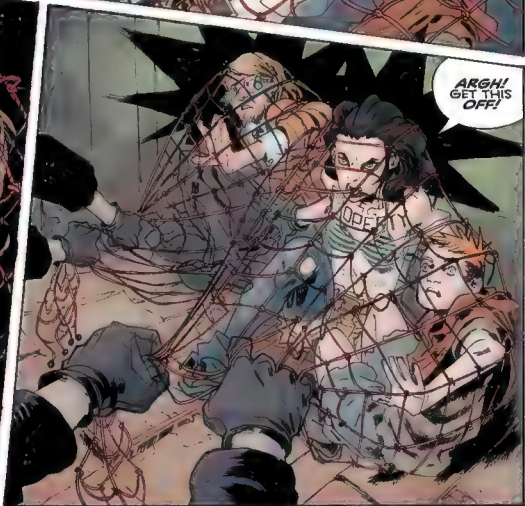
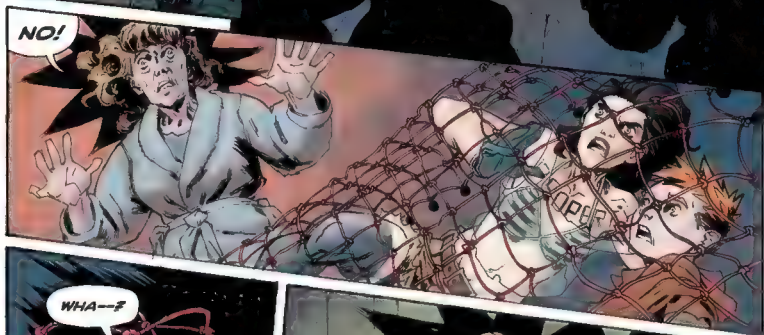






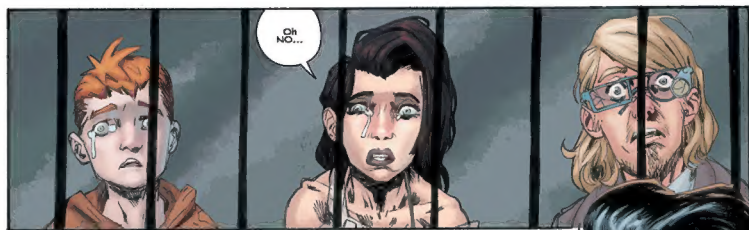












THE SHADOW REBEL READER

E-MAIL US AT: ORCHID@DARKHORSE.COM
WRITE TO US AT: THE SHADOW REBEL READER
C/O DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 SE MAIN STREET, MILWAUKEE, WI 53222

Welcome to the letter column for *Orchid*, the new Dark Horse series by Tom Morello and Scott Hepburn. I hope you greatly enjoyed issue #1 and its very first look into Orchid's world, which is not unlike our own if you look closely enough, and yet very, very different. Please share your thoughts, feelings, and questions regarding the series by e-mailing the address above, and we'll run your letters here for the duration of the series.

Each issue of *Orchid* will also be accompanied by a free piece of musical score by Morello. The first song, "It Begins Tonight," is featured on Morello's latest *Nightwatchman* album, *World Wide Rebel Songs*, but complimentary to you, dear reader! Please check it out here:
NightwatchmanMusic.com

Please return next month with your issue of *Orchid* in hand, while you listen to music composed specifically for the comics. It's a totally unique experience that could only be done with a story so grand, evocative, and powerful as *Orchid* will surely be. You won't want to miss a moment.

A letter!

Hello,

I heard you were looking for thoughts and/or questions in regards to the upcoming release of *Orchid*, the new comic book conceived by Tom Morello. I actually reported the news about *Orchid* for a website I freelance for when I first heard about it in *Comic Shop News*—so, as you can imagine, I'm excited by this upcoming project. I'm hoping that the story is compelling, but knowing Mr. Morello's activism, I'm sure there will also be some social commentary. I'm all for this, because, as an activist myself, I think that anything we can do to raise awareness of social injustices and inequalities is a worthy endeavor—especially when done through art.

I do want to say, though, that even though I've been a fan of Tom Morello since I first heard his wonderful guitar talents in *Rage Against the Machine* (way back in the nineties), and have followed his career with enthusiasm for his guitar-playing ability as well as his songwriting ability (as realized in his *Nightwatchman* project), I will not blindly consume everything he puts out. Meaning: if the comic blows, I will not continue to buy it.

I think it's interesting that there will be a song released with each issue (I'm assuming a digital-download key will be provided). This is phenomenal marketing, especially if the song ties to the issue in some way. One of my favorite books of all time, *Local*, by Brian Wood, had the author putting a soundtrack to each issue

at the back. It made the entire project that much more enjoyable to reread the book with some of those songs playing in the background.

I am wondering if there is a defined end to the series? I'm sure that will be dependent upon sales, as well as the whims of Mr. Morello himself, but I'm hoping the character is left in such a way that future stories could be crafted, if or when creativity strikes.

All in all, I'm looking forward to this series, and am thrilled to see so many outputs for such a gifted artist and musician. Here's hoping that the comic is everything Dark Horse and Tom Morello hope it can be, and more. Cheers!

Respectfully, Ben Locke

Thanks for heeding our call for letters, Ben. *Orchid* will be twelve issues altogether. Having now read this first issue, I hope you've enjoyed the experience and will return next month for some more wonderfully bizarre world building, as well as tension building between the rather chatty Simon and the fierce survivor Orchid.



Sierra Mahn, editor



Slave traders, warrior women, and mutant bears roam the Wilds!
NEXT MONTH: *Orchid* #2